



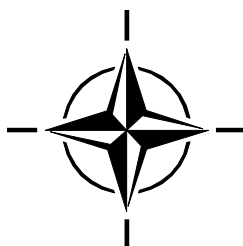
RTO EDUCATIONAL NOTES

EN-HFM-167

Psychological Support Across the Deployment Cycle

(L'aide psychologique au cours du cycle de déploiement)

The material in this publication was assembled to support a Lecture Series under the sponsorship of the Human Factors and Medicine Panel (HFM) presented in Madrid, Spain on 13-14 October 2008 and in Tartu, Estonia on 30-31 October 2008.



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The Research and Technology Organisation (RTO) of NATO

RTO is the single focus in NATO for Defence Research and Technology activities. Its mission is to conduct and promote co-operative research and information exchange. The objective is to support the development and effective use of national defence research and technology and to meet the military needs of the Alliance, to maintain a technological lead, and to provide advice to NATO and national decision makers. The RTO performs its mission with the support of an extensive network of national experts. It also ensures effective co-ordination with other NATO bodies involved in R&T activities.

RTO reports both to the Military Committee of NATO and to the Conference of National Armament Directors. It comprises a Research and Technology Board (RTB) as the highest level of national representation and the Research and Technology Agency (RTA), a dedicated staff with its headquarters in Neuilly, near Paris, France. In order to facilitate contacts with the military users and other NATO activities, a small part of the RTA staff is located in NATO Headquarters in Brussels. The Brussels staff also co-ordinates RTO's co-operation with nations in Middle and Eastern Europe, to which RTO attaches particular importance especially as working together in the field of research is one of the more promising areas of co-operation.

The total spectrum of R&T activities is covered by the following 7 bodies:

- AVT Applied Vehicle Technology Panel
- HFM Human Factors and Medicine Panel
- IST Information Systems Technology Panel
- NMSG NATO Modelling and Simulation Group
- SAS System Analysis and Studies Panel
- SCI Systems Concepts and Integration Panel
- SET Sensors and Electronics Technology Panel

These bodies are made up of national representatives as well as generally recognised 'world class' scientists. They also provide a communication link to military users and other NATO bodies. RTO's scientific and technological work is carried out by Technical Teams, created for specific activities and with a specific duration. Such Technical Teams can organise workshops, symposia, field trials, lecture series and training courses. An important function of these Technical Teams is to ensure the continuity of the expert networks.

RTO builds upon earlier co-operation in defence research and technology as set-up under the Advisory Group for Aerospace Research and Development (AGARD) and the Defence Research Group (DRG). AGARD and the DRG share common roots in that they were both established at the initiative of Dr Theodore von Kármán, a leading aerospace scientist, who early on recognised the importance of scientific support for the Allied Armed Forces. RTO is capitalising on these common roots in order to provide the Alliance and the NATO nations with a strong scientific and technological basis that will guarantee a solid base for the future.

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Psychological Support Across the Deployment Cycle

(RTO-EN-HFM-167)

Executive Summary

NATO Task Group HFM-081/RTG on “Stress and Psychological Support in Modern Military Operations” was formed in 2002 with the direction that it was to run for a period of four years. HFM-081/RTG consisted of over 30 professionals representing 19 different NATO and PfP nations, including a variety of military and civilian defence professionals from the field of military psychological support, representing a range of disciplines, such as psychology, psychiatry, social work and sociology.

Among its various achievements, the Task Group conducted an international research project, a Military Leaders’ Survey of 172 NATO and PfP military leaders across 16 nations who identified key areas of interest related to psychological health on operations. These leaders included both officers and enlisted personnel from all branches of service. Each participant had served in a leadership capacity on a deployment sometime in the past two years. Leaders described areas related to operational stress about which they wanted information, and they also provided personal accounts illustrating key points.

The Task Group also produced reports on best practices in psychological support before, during and after operations, inventories of instruments used to survey unit morale as well and an inventory of clinical tools used across NATO- and PfP nations for assessment, intervention and education with individuals and groups before, during and after deployments in routine and crisis situations. In addition, the Task Group sponsored a ground-breaking NATO symposium, HFM-134, “Human Dimensions in Military Operations: Military Leaders’ Strategies for Addressing Stress and Psychological Support”. The symposium, developed by the Task Group and co-sponsored by the NATO Committee of the Chiefs of Military Medical Services (COMEDS) Military Psychiatry Working Group (MP-WG), was held in Brussels in April 2006 and served as a platform for the latter part of the Task Group’s work.

The final product of the Task Group is a series of guidelines for psychological support in military operations, in the form of a Military Leaders Guide. Military leaders at all levels have a key role in sustaining the mental readiness of service members under their command and play an important part in maintaining morale on the home front for military families. The Guide provides military leaders with information and practical strategies for dealing with stress and the provision of psychological support in order to enhance unit effectiveness in modern military operations.

The information presented in the report and guide is the result of the Task Group’s international collaboration and brings together information from two sources: national experts and military leaders. In the case of national experts, the representatives from the Task Group joined together to outline the key areas of importance and agreement regarding psychological support on military operations. While there are gaps in the research literature and therefore a lack of science-based evidence to support some of the decisions about psychological support in military operations, the members of the NATO HFM-081/RTG have made recommendations based upon what is considered to be current best practice.

L'aide psychologique au cours du cycle de déploiement (RTO-EN-HFM-167)

Synthèse

Le groupe de travail OTAN HFM-081/RTG portant sur « Stress et aide psychologique dans les opérations militaires modernes » a été formé en 2002 pour une période de quatre ans. Le HFM-081/RTG était constitué de plus de 30 professionnels représentant 19 nations de l'OTAN et du Partenariat pour la paix (PfP), y compris plusieurs professionnels de la défense, civils ou militaires, spécialistes de l'aide psychologique militaire, et recouvrant un éventail de disciplines telles que la psychologie, la psychiatrie, l'assistantat social ou la sociologie.

Parmi ses nombreuses réalisations, ce groupe de travail a mené un projet de recherche international : une étude réalisée auprès de 172 chefs militaires de 16 nations de l'OTAN et du PfP, qui a identifié les principaux domaines d'intérêt relatifs à la santé mentale lors des opérations. Parmi ces chefs, on comptait aussi bien des officiers que des engagés de toutes les armes. Chacun des participants avait assumé, à un moment donné au cours des deux années précédentes, un poste à responsabilité lors d'un déploiement. Ces chefs ont décrit les domaines liés au stress opérationnel sur lesquels ils aimeraient obtenir des informations, et ont également évoqué des actions personnelles afin d'illustrer des points clés.

Le groupe de travail a, par ailleurs, présenté des rapports sur les meilleures pratiques de l'aide psychologique – avant, pendant et après les opérations –, et inventorié les instruments disponibles pour analyser le moral d'une unité ainsi que les outils cliniques utilisés par les nations de l'OTAN et du PfP en vue d'évaluer, d'informer et d'intervenir auprès d'individus et de groupes, pendant et après les déploiements, lors de situations de crise ou de routine. En outre, le groupe de travail a commandité un symposium inédit de l'OTAN, le HFM-134 : « Dimensions humaines dans les opérations militaires : stratégies des chefs militaires pour gérer le stress et apporter leur aide psychologique ». Ce symposium, développé par le groupe de travail et co-commandité par le groupe de travail sur la Psychiatrie militaire (MP-WG) du Comité des chefs des services de santé militaires au sein de l'OTAN (COMEDS), s'est déroulé à Bruxelles en avril 2006 et a servi de plateforme pour la dernière partie de l'étude du groupe de travail.

Le résultat final du groupe de travail est une série de directives relatives à l'aide psychologique lors des opérations militaires, se présentant sous la forme d'un Guide à destination des chefs militaires. A tous les niveaux, ces derniers ont une fonction essentielle dans le soutien de la préparation mentale des personnels servant sous leurs ordres, et jouent aussi un rôle important dans la conservation du moral sur le front domestique pour les familles des militaires. Ce guide fournit des informations et des stratégies pratiques aux chefs militaires pour gérer le stress et apporter leur aide psychologique en vue d'améliorer l'efficacité de leur unité lors d'opérations militaires modernes.

Les informations présentées dans le rapport et le guide sont le résultat de la collaboration internationale du groupe de travail. Elles regroupent des informations provenant de deux sources : experts nationaux et chefs militaires. Dans le cas des experts nationaux, les représentants du groupe de travail se sont réunis pour esquisser les principaux domaines de convergence relatifs à l'aide psychologique lors des opérations militaires. Bien qu'il existe des lacunes dans la littérature de recherche, et donc un manque de preuves scientifiques à l'appui de certaines décisions relatives à l'aide psychologique lors des opérations militaires, les membres du HFM-081/RTG de l'OTAN ont émis des recommandations en se fondant sur ce que l'on considère actuellement comme la meilleure pratique.

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